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National Intelligence Bulletin

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May 29, 1975

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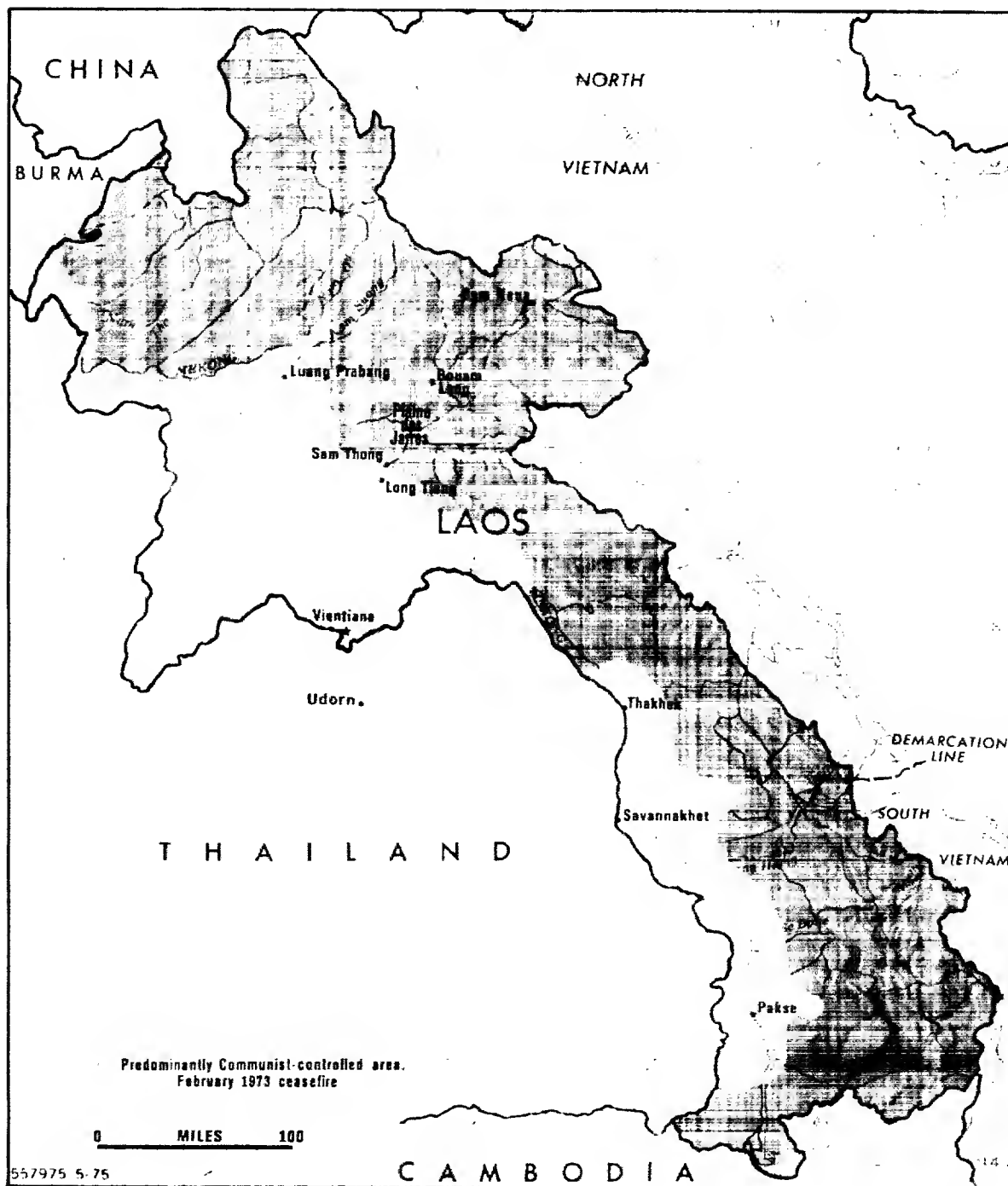
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LAOS

American officials yesterday reentered the main USAID and defense attache compound in Vientiane without serious incident. The compound had been sealed off by communist-inspired demonstrators and Pathet Lao security forces for the past week. The two US Marine guards and one American civilian employee barricaded inside the compound were released unharmed and in apparent good health.

The reoccupation followed the signing of a pact with Pathet Lao officials and leftist student leaders in which the US agreed to abolish USAID, withdraw all of its American personnel, and turn over by June 30 most of its equipment and facilities to the Lao government.

The evacuation of all remaining American personnel from the US residential housing complex on the northern outskirts of Vientiane was completed yesterday. Overall, some 182 official and 111 nonofficial American personnel are still in the Lao capital.

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LEBANON

President Franjiyah made a significant concession yesterday when he designated Rashid Karami to form a new government. The two are long-time foes, and Karami is a powerful Sunni Muslim leader with an independent political base. Karami probably demanded and was granted greater authority to choose his own cabinet and make government policy than his weak predecessors were allowed.

Karami has long maintained that Muslims are underrepresented in Lebanon's government and should have more political power. Last March, he called for fundamental changes in the country's 30-year-old National Covenant, which provides for the distribution of political posts on the basis of a Christian majority in the country's population, but this majority no longer exists.

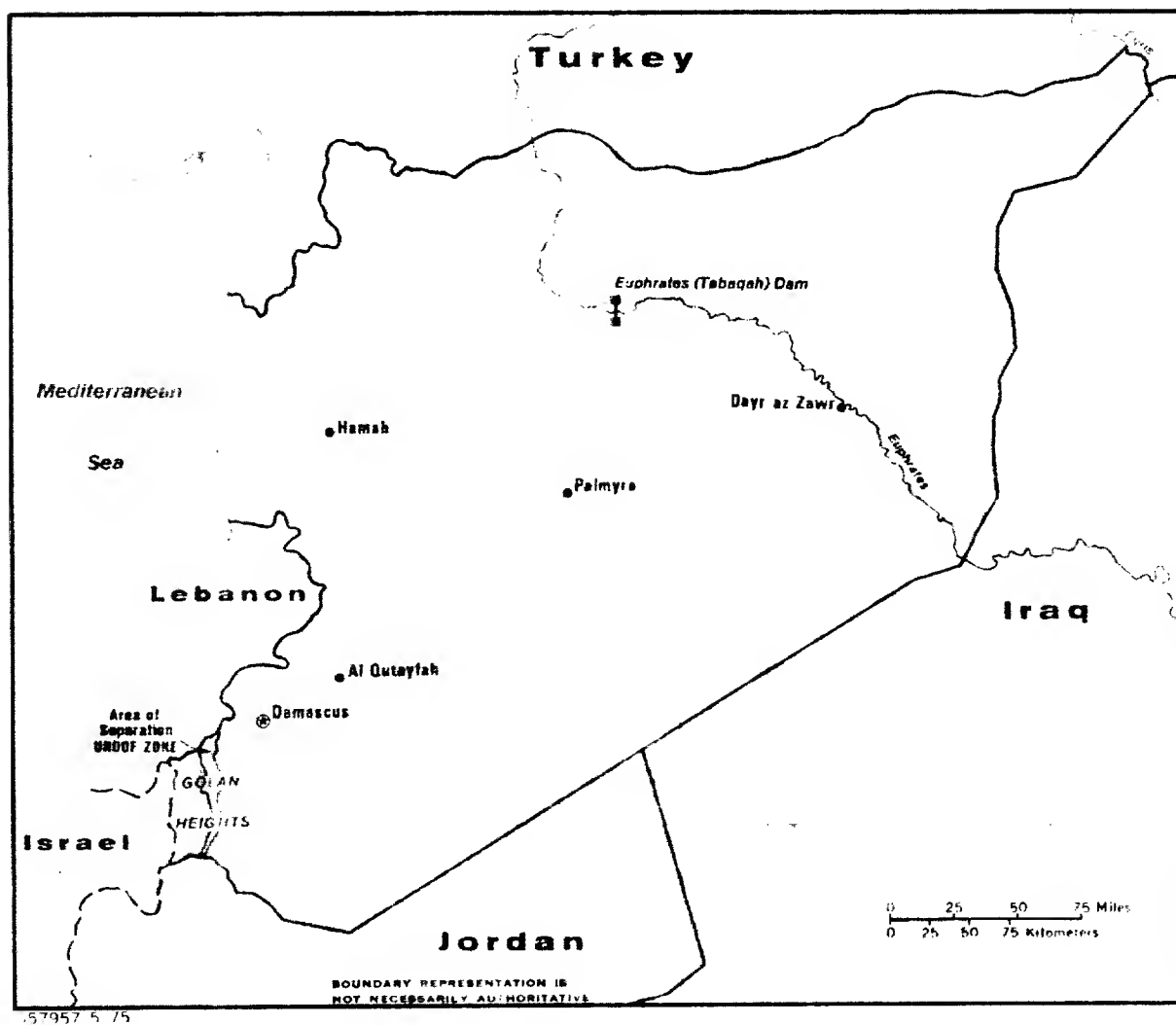
Syria and the Palestinians will welcome Karami's appointment. He is an Arab nationalist who in 1969 gave up an effort to form a government to protest an attempt by former president Hilou to use force to control the fedayeen. He later became prime minister after the rights and responsibilities of Palestinians in Lebanon were spelled out in the Cairo Accord of November 1969.

The Phalangists, who have been engaged for a week in armed clashes with Lebanese leftists and radical fedayeen, have long opposed Karami. They nevertheless appear willing to give him a chance; Phalangist leader Jumayyil said yesterday that his party "seeks stability and supports a strong prime minister to ensure this."

Karami is an ally of Raymond Edde, head of the National Bloc, a large, predominantly Christian political party. Edde recently has been critical of Franjiyah, and joined with Muslim leaders in demanding the resignation of the short-lived military cabinet last weekend. Edde, with Karami's support, is likely to seek the presidency when Franjiyah's term expires next year.

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SYRIA

Syria is continuing to move large armored units to the northern and eastern portions of the country.

The US defense attache in Damascus reports that on Sunday more than 100 tanks and transporters were moving north in the vicinity of Hamah. On the same day, a convoy of trucks carrying support equipment was seen north of Hamah. The day before, a foreign diplomat observed another northward-bound convoy of about 100 vehicles. Although most were trucks loaded with armed troops, tanks and armored cars were also identified.

The units involved in these movements are most likely subordinate to the 3rd Armored Division, which is normally located northeast of Damascus in the Al Qutayfah area. The troops are probably being sent either to the Tabaqah Dam or Dayr az Zawr area in eastern Syria in connection with the dispute with Iraq over water from the Euphrates River. The 1st Armored Division was moved to the vicinity of Palmyra two weeks ago.

If the units that are moving to the north and east are from the 3rd Division, Syrian reserves for the Golan front have been significantly reduced. In the event of an Israeli attack, the Republican Guard located west of Damascus would be the only reserve unit immediately available to counter a penetration of the defense. After 12 hours—under optimum conditions—elements of the 1st Armored Division could be moved to the front.

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USSR

Politburo member Kunayev and candidate-member Romanov opened the leadership's campaigns for reelection to the parliaments of the republics with reports this week to their constituencies in Kazakhstan and Leningrad. Other Kremlin leaders, speaking roughly in ascending order of their rank, are making similar presentations over the next three weeks. General Secretary Brezhnev is expected to make the final speech shortly before the elections on June 15.

The speeches provide an opportunity for the leaders to air their individual views—albeit with caution—and to gain support for them.

The top leaders are customarily nominated for more than one seat in the parliament of a republic, and the number garnered sheds light on the individual's political standing.

As he did in last year's nominations for the USSR Supreme Soviet, Brezhnev clearly leads the field, and the other rankings show no significant change.

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ITALY

The campaign for Italy's nationwide regional and local elections on June 15 is in full swing; debate centers on national political themes.

The law-and-order issue continues to generate the most heat. One of parliament's last acts before recessing last week was to pass a law intended to combat rising crime and political violence. None of the parties was satisfied with the final version; the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats wanted a tougher approach, while the Socialists and Communists maintained that the law infringes on civil liberties by giving the police too much leeway in fields such as preventive detention. As a result, the law-and-order debate is likely to intensify as the campaign gathers steam, especially if the violence continues.

Growing differences between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats on other issues caused the Socialists to split with the center-left majority in the last few parliamentary votes. They refused, for example, to go along with the majority on policy toward state industries. If the Socialists do well in the elections, they are expected to demand more influence in the management of the state industries, heretofore the almost exclusive preserve of the Christian Democrats and the major source of their patronage.

The elections are also focusing attention on the question of broader Communist participation in national policy-making. One of the main points in Christian Democratic leader Fanfani's generally conservative platform is a firm "no" to collaboration with the Communists at any level of government. Communist chief Berlinguer is campaigning on the theme that Italy's problems can be solved only by ending the "discrimination" against his party, Italy's second largest.

The polemic between Fanfani and the Communists was enlivened this week by a *Time* magazine interview with Fanfani in which he asserted that collaboration with the Communists would threaten international detente and spell the "end of free Italy."

Berlinguer was probably particularly irritated that the interview was aimed at an American audience, since he has been trying to allay the concerns of US officials about a possible cabinet role for the Communists.

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ARGENTINA

Presidential adviser Lopez Rega is on the verge of winning another victory by forcing the resignation of Economy Minister Gomez Morales.

The impending departure of this highly competent economist signals not only the growing power of Lopez Rega but also the administration's attempts to retain a populist image, even at the expense of sound economic planning. Moreover, without an internationally respected minister in this position, Argentina's efforts to secure foreign loans will be hampered.

Gomez Morales has consistently objected to Lopez Rega's firm backing for politically expedient expansive social welfare spending and salary hikes to satisfy Peronist labor. With Gomez Morales out of the way, Lopez Rega will be able to exert a major influence on Argentina's economic policy. A protege with limited experience will apparently be named to replace Gomez Morales.

According to a number of sources, Gomez Morales submitted his resignation to President Peron some weeks ago because of the government's obvious lack of enthusiasm for his austerity plans. She reportedly accepted the resignation, but asked the minister to stay on until the conclusion of negotiations with labor on wage guidelines, probably by June 1.

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COLOMBIA: President Lopez has dismissed army commander General Alvaro Valencia in an apparent effort to end unrest within the military. Much of the officer corps divided along policy lines into pro-Lopez and anti-Lopez groups following the President's disciplining of five generals and several colonels three weeks ago. The officers who were disciplined had taken strong exception to Lopez' increasing use of the army as a police force to control the many demonstrations that have plagued the country since late last year. By firing Valencia, Lopez has removed the de facto leader of the anti-Lopez group. The President's problems are likely to continue, however, as Valencia can now speak his mind from outside the restraints of military discipline. Moreover, the new army commander, Major General Luis Carlos Camacho Leyva, former army chief of staff, has also been identified with the anti-Lopez group.

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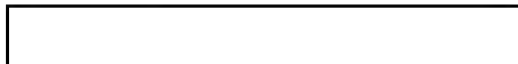
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